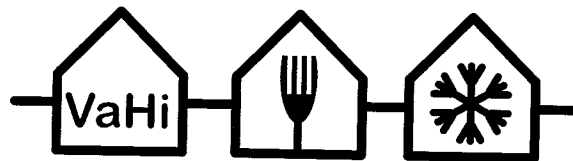


The Virginia-Highland

# VOICE

Fall 2007



## HOMES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The 13th Annual Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes

DECEMBER 8 & 9

[www.vahihometour.org](http://www.vahihometour.org)

### Inside:

#### Inappropriate Infill:

Could historic district zoning be the answer?

#### Update on Neighborhood Commercial Zoning Initiative

#### New Beginnings at Piedmont Park

#### The Bus Stop

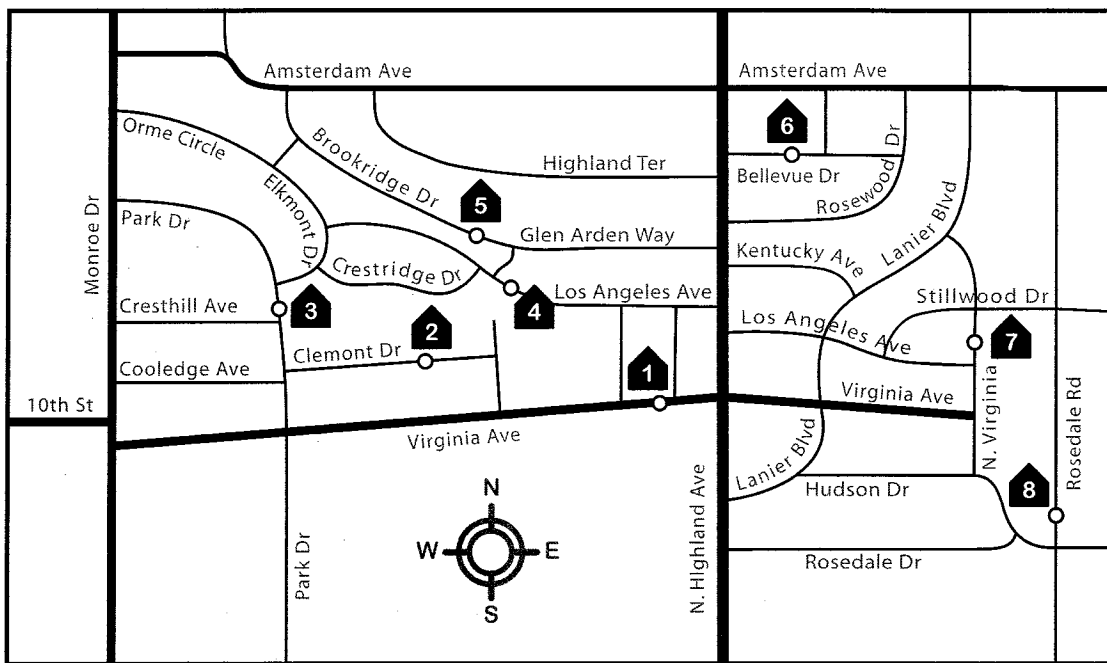
News of interest from Inman Middle and Morningside Elementary Schools

by: Rob Glancy and Charlie LeFort

If it's December, it must be time for the Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes, presented by the Virginia-Highland Civic Association. Now in its 13th year, the event takes place on Saturday, December 8th from 10AM - 5PM, and Sunday, December 9th from Noon - 5PM.

Themed "Homes for the Holidays", the event has established itself as the most distinctive home tour in the city thanks to the pairing of wonderful homes and some of Atlanta's finest restaurants. Over the past three years the tour has raised over \$60,000 for the neighborhood with tour proceeds directly benefiting Virginia-Highland schools, parks and sidewalk projects.

"This year's tour reflects the best representation of Virginia-Highland homes in the four years since we revived the event," said Rob Glancy, returning steering committee chair. "We have meticulous renovations of period homes from each decade from the teens through the fifties, as well as a much celebrated new construction home that, in the tour committee's assessment, flawlessly melts into the fabric of the neighborhood."



This year's collection of homes includes

- 5** a smart renovation with a master bathroom suite "to die for" 850 Brookridge Dr. *Owners:* Bob Hussle and Eric Erickson
- 7** a chef's dream kitchen that's guaranteed to impress 1055 N. Virginia Ave. *Owners:* Charles and Mimi Bedict
- 2** a well-chosen design with a "tree house-like" master bedroom overlooking vast green space 828 Clemont Dr. *Owners:* Larry Santiago and Mark Hoppert
- 1** a newly built bungalow replete with all of today's modern technology 950 Virginia Ave. *Owner:* Pete Mounts
- 4** and smart and tasteful interiors amidst wonderful holiday décor 855 Los Angeles Ave. *Owners:* Mark Higdon and Tracy Morrow

In addition, see three fine examples of classic Virginia-Highland homes that will surely impress:

- 6** 1012 Bellevue Dr. *Owner:* Jennifer Crowe
- 3** 712 Park Dr. *Owners:* Guy and Sherry Thacker
- 8** 946 Rosedale Rd. *Owners:* Jake and Kendall Frank

Inside all of these beautiful homes, you'll experience warm and lavish living spaces, with interior décors featuring exquisite antiques, as well as eclectic and fanciful interiors – all guaranteed to inspire you!

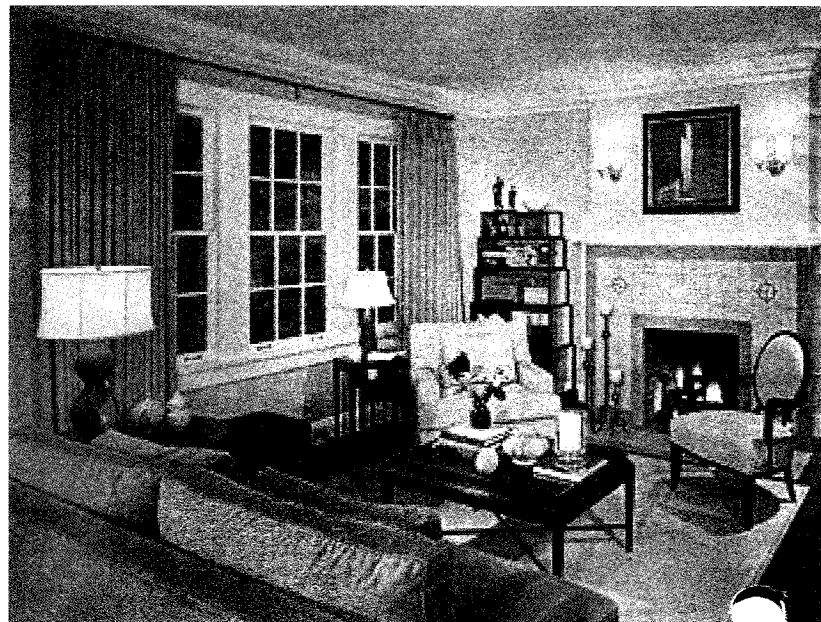
Chef demonstrations and food tastings from local restaurants *Dish, Noche, Murphy's, Food 101, Vine, Sala, Atkins Park, La Tavola* and *Shorty's* will be held at each of the eight homes from noon to 4 pm on both afternoons.

Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 the weekend of the Tour and can be purchased at:

- *Intown Ace Hardware*, 854 N. Highland Ave.
- *Aurora Coffee*, 992 N. Highland Ave.
- 950 Virginia Ave., 712 Park Dr. and 850 Brookridge Dr. (on tour days only)

Visit [www.vahihometour.org](http://www.vahihometour.org) for more information or to purchase tickets or e-mail the Tour Committee at [tour@vahi.org](mailto:tour@vahi.org). Anyone interested in volunteering should email [volunteer@vahihometour.org](mailto:volunteer@vahihometour.org) to sign up for any remaining shifts. Please join us for a festive event that's sure to please the senses!

See this cozy, well-appointed room at the home of Bob Hussle and Eric Erickson, 850 Brookridge Dr.



**Virginia-Highland Civic Association**  
2007-08 Board of Directors

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President, Summerfest (Co-Chair)  
ppapner@earthlink.net

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Planning, Neighborhood Preservation, Voice  
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**John Wolfinger**  
Public Safety, Sidewalks  
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**The Virginia-Highland Voice**

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Published quarterly, by and for the residents  
of Virginia-Highland

Editor: John Becker

Design: Preeti Ayyangar

Business Manager: Amy Eisner

We welcome your feedback on *The Virginia-Highland Voice*.  
Please send your comments to [editor@vahi.org](mailto:editor@vahi.org).

The Virginia-Highland Voice welcomes Amy Eisner as our  
new business manager. Amy will be responsible for selling  
advertising for the newsletter and will also handle billing and  
collection of outstanding A/R. If you are interested in  
advertising in *Voice* please contact Amy by sending an email  
to [businessmanager@vahi.org](mailto:businessmanager@vahi.org).

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**VHCA Calendar**

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**Monthly Board Meetings**

When: First Monday of each month, 7 p.m

Where: Public Library on Ponce de Leon Ave.

**Planning Committee Meetings**

When: Last Wednesday of each month

Where: Public Library on Ponce de Leon Ave.

Meeting locations subject to change

**"Homes for the Holidays" Home Tour**

Saturday and Sunday, December 8-9, 2007

Please visit our web site for calendar updates, additional  
information on VHCA or to join: [www.vahi.org](http://www.vahi.org)



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# President's Corner

by: Pamela Papner

President, Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board

## Virginia-Highland Civic Association

- Awards Over \$33,000 in Grants to Benefit Community
- Recognizes Significant Contributors to Community
- Welcomes Newly-Elected Board Members

At its annual meeting on September 10, 2007, the Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board of Directors awarded the following grants to organizations whose activities benefit our community, schools and overall quality of life:

The Board also recognized the following individuals for their contributions and service to the Virginia-Highland community:

### Aaron Gross Community Service Award:

The award was created in 2004 to honor Aaron Gross, who at his death in 2003, was serving in his fourth year as Chair of NPU-F. He had long been an active contributor to the quality of life in Virginia-Highland, serving on the board of the Civic Association, leading Summerfest, and representing his neighborhood on citywide issues. With this award, the VHCA recognizes individuals who have made significant and long-term contributions to the community. This year, the 2 recipients were Warren Bruno and Conne-Ward Cameron. The VHCA will make a \$500 donation to a qualified tax-exempt organization of each award winner's choosing.

• **Warren Bruno** is the owner of Atkins Park Restaurant. He began Summerfest and ran the event from 1987 to 1991, turning it over to the VHCA after that. He has since supplied food for the community dinner held the Friday before Summerfest. He was co-founder of the Virginia-Highland Business Association and for the last 3 years, he served on the Morningside Local School Council where he is Vice-President of the PTA, in charge of special events. He also served as co-chair of the Inman Technology Foundation, which has raised over \$65,000 for technology to support the school. The plan to implement Promethian Interactive Boards in Inman Classrooms was the latest achievement, significantly improving the way teachers teach. In honor of Warren's contributions, the VHCA will donate \$500 to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

• **Conne-Ward Cameron** is a former member of the VHCA Board, as well as past president of the Atkins Park Civic Association and former NPU zoning chair. Conne has always worked tirelessly on many community projects outside her formal roles, and can always be counted on to support any endeavor - whether it is training new VHCA Board members on zoning; volunteering for or organizing Summerfest; or whatever is needed to support

any community event for Atkins Park and Virginia-Highland generally. She also led development of the Ponce Moreland Corridor Master Plan and Atkins Park Gardens & Getaways. In honor of Conne's contributions, the VHCA will donate \$500 to the Atlanta Preservation Center, a group that has been actively involved in historic preservation and the Beltline project.

### Additional Honorees:

The following individuals were also recognized for their significant contributions to our community:

**Linda Guthrie, Mary Chance and Marilyn Morton** for their efforts resulting in Historic Designation for St. Augustine, St. Charles and St. Louis streets in the Atkins Park neighborhood.

**Pam Ahern and Melissa Yuhus** for recruiting and organizing volunteers for 2007 Summerfest.

**Joy Russo** for her significant efforts to raise \$33,500 required to install seven more "antique look" streetlights with underground wiring in Atkins Park.

**Billie Jo** for her years of service to improve the quality of life in Virginia-Highland, including creation of the Frederica Watch, her time as VHCA Safety Chair, her work to support PEDs and the St. Charles/Greenwood Association, and her work to support plantings for floral islands and more trees, just to name a few.

**John Becker and Preeti Ayyangar** for their great work this year as Editor and Designer of the Virginia-Highland Voice community newsletter.

**Liz Coyle, Jack White, John Wolfinger and John Peak**, NPU-F Vice Chair and VHCA Board Members, respectively, for going "above and beyond" this year. Their community work has and will continue to have long lasting positive impacts on the safety and quality of life we enjoy.

### New Board Members Elected:

VHCA Board elections were held at the annual meeting on September 10th. Newly elected this year are Hannah Coker (Secretary); Joe Krebs (Planning Co-Chair); Charlie LeFort; and Karen Page (Treasurer). Returning Board members include Doris Betz (Communications Chair); Allie Coker; Rob Glancy (Parks and Home Tour Chair); Elizabeth (Betsy) Nicholas (Vice President); Pamela Papner (President, Summerfest Chair); John Peak (Planning Co-Chair, Webmaster); Robby Russell (Atkins Park Rep); and John Wolfinger (Safety Chair).

## Update on Neighborhood Commercial Zoning Initiative

by: John Peak

Significant work continues on the Neighborhood Commercial (“NC”) initiative as the NC Steering Committee obtains input from both residents and commercial property owners on a proposed zoning ordinance. This process is intended to seek consensus in the community to rezone the three commercial nodes along N. Highland Ave. to preserve the neighborhood-friendly character of the commercial village should they ever be redeveloped.

Since the start of the year, the Neighborhood Commercial (“NC”) Steering Committee has held:

- 10 internal planning meetings
- Six committee training meetings
- Five informal neighborhood “living room” meetings
- One community-wide informational meeting
- Two neighborhood feedback charettes
- Three commercial property owner meetings

Based on generally positive feedback in support of exploring NC zoning, we continue to refine details of the proposed legislation.

### Key points:

1. Rezoning would apply to the three main commercial nodes on North Highland.
2. Height for most new development would be limited to three stories.
3. Each node has one property or portion of a property zoned Residential that would be changed to NC. In all three cases the properties currently have legal, non-conforming status, including two that are parking lots.
4. The legislation is being tailored to provide a comprehensive parking solution for each node.

Committee members are in active discussions with commercial property owners. These discussions focus on how NC would impact specific parcels and how it could be modified to address any concerns. Once this phase is complete we will conduct additional formal outreach to the community to provide updates and gather feedback. Your comments are always welcome and encouraged. Please direct these to [ncinfo@vahi.org](mailto:ncinfo@vahi.org). In the event consensus is reached between residents and commercial property owners, and a viable plan proposed, legislation could be submitted to the Atlanta City Council for vote in early 2008.

## Orme Park Moves Forward with Master Plan

by: Jack White

The Orme Park Committee spent late spring and summer going through a public master planning effort led by Park Pride, whose grant award to the park last year initiated the process. There was extensive surveying of Va-Hi citizens and park users and then a series of meetings where residents gradually reduced a wide selection of park uses to a series of consensus-driven selections. The group was aided throughout the process by the sharp pencil of Park Pride landscape architect Walt Ray.

The final result will be a soon-to-be-finalized master plan that can be used to both prioritize projects and begin the fundraising campaigns needed to implement them. While the latter process will be on-going, immediate changes will be seen and routine maintenance continues.

Please check the Parks site at [www.vahi.org](http://www.vahi.org) for notice of future committee meetings and a look at the master plan.



Wishing you and your family a  
Happy Holiday Season

[www.thecareteam.com](http://www.thecareteam.com)

# The Bus Stop

News of interest from Inman Middle and Morningside Elementary Schools.

## Inman Middle School

Denise Romeo  
VP Communications, Inman PTA

Inman Middle School students hit the ground running this school year. Before school began, 6th graders attended a half-day orientation, designed to ease the transition to Inman. Our 6th graders travelled to Rock Eagle 4-H Center a few weeks later for outdoor experiences and team-building activities.

In September, Dr. Bockman and her teaching staff encouraged parents to participate in the inaugural Shadow Days where parents of 6th and 7th graders were invited to "shadow" their children. Parents went to each classroom to learn beside their children. The event was so successful that Inman opened the doors for 5th grade parents to come to Inman and shadow 6th grade Ambassadors for a day. A Shadow Day for 8th grade parents is in the works!

Throughout the school year, Superintendent Dr. Beverly L. Hall hosts Community Fireside Chats at APS schools. The first Fireside Chat this year was held at our own Inman Middle School in September. During the chat, members of the community were updated on APS district progress and given the opportunity to ask questions of and provide feedback to the APS leadership team.

Twelve Promethean boards were recently installed in Inman math and Science classrooms. These interactive white boards harness the power of the Internet to create an engaging, interactive learning experience. This tremendous improvement was made possible by Inman's Technology Foundation with generous contributions from Inman parents, the PTA, AT&T Georgia, the Virginia-Highland Civic Association and the Atlanta Women's Club. This is just the beginning of the Inman Technology Foundation's plans to outfit each math and science class with this exciting technology.

Inman's magazine sale was a huge success. Over \$20,000 was raised to support our enrichment programs, teacher support, and scholarships. Please remember to save your magazine renewals for next September. You can even renew your magazines online at [www.aphearst.com](http://www.aphearst.com). Just type in the code school code of #WA7188 and Inman will get credit for your purchase!

We finished the first nine weeks of school with Inman's annual BBQ & Blues Bash, a chance for Inman families to enjoy barbequed pork and chicken provided by Atkins Park. Inman families grooved to the music of "The Blues Barons" while socializing with old and new friends.

Please take a few minutes to visit the Inman website at [www.inmanmiddleschool.org](http://www.inmanmiddleschool.org). On the site, you can get quick access to online copies of Inman's monthly newsletter, the Inman Insight, use the interactive online PTA calendar, and sign up for the Inman On-Line Update (click on "Mailing List" and enter your email address to sign up for the PTA's weekly email updates on what's happening at Inman).

## Morningside Elementary School

Susie Lazega & Blaine Schreiner  
MES PTA Co-Presidents

Morningside Elementary has a cadre of helpful, eager, clever parents working to make our school a great place to learn and grow and we are off to a great start in 2007.

First, we successfully opened the Kindergarten Campus. Many happy children are expanding their horizons there with wonderful MES teachers.

Our Sally Foster Wrapping Paper sale went very well and brought in close to \$52,000. We are able to provide wonderful enrichment programs for the children with these funds.

On September 27th the parents celebrated a night out at Smith's Olde Bar with music provided by Morningside parents. It was a great night to hang out with grown-ups. One of the bands, "The Lice Men," will perform during our auction at Park Tavern next spring.

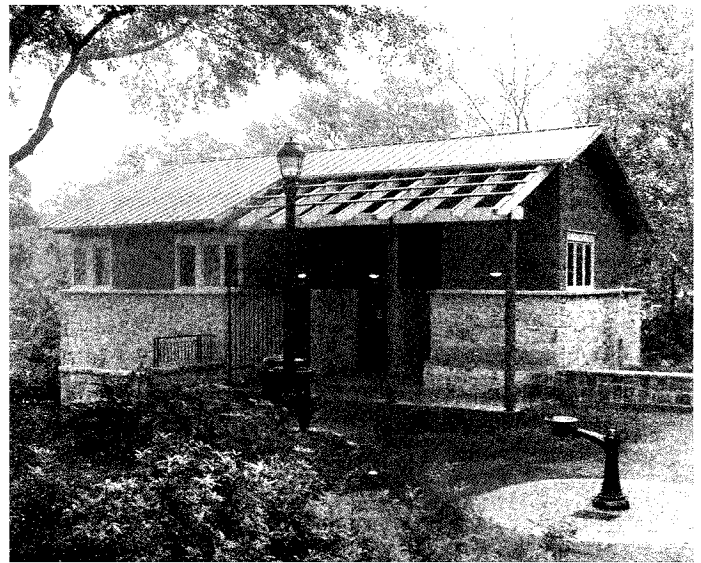
Our new playground was dedicated on October 20th. MES Parents Christa Martin and Craig Pigg spearheaded the drive to fund the program and under their leadership the Morningside community raised more than \$120,000. Many parents put in countless hours to make this dream a reality.

Our Halloween Carnival took place on October 27th with a Harry Potter and Hogwarts theme. We were thrilled – and chilled – to be able to pull this great community gathering together. Megan Hodgson, Laura Levy, Jill Breland and an amazing team of volunteers helped make this wonderful community event possible. Thanks to the following sponsors whose support made the carnival a huge success: *Fig Partners, Intown Renovations, Doc Chey's/Osteria 832, Briarcliff Animal Clinic, Coldwell Banker/Sally Westmoreland and Highland Tap/Nadine's Triple Crown.*

# New Beginnings at Piedmont Park

by: Judy McCabe Smith

Stop by soon and see all the wonderful things happening at Atlanta's crown jewel of green space!



After four years of planning the 53-acre expansion of Piedmont Park, the new Master Plan was approved. The expansion is now underway with the Capital Campaign and the November 2007 groundbreaking of the new Piedmont Park Pool & Bathhouse renovation. This amazing Master Plan has been captured in a new video which lets you actually see how these 53 acres of park will be transformed. You can view the video on-line at [http://www.piedmontpark.org/video/PP\\_320.html](http://www.piedmontpark.org/video/PP_320.html).

Phase One of the expansion, themed "Breaking New Ground," will lay the infrastructure and foundation upon which future accommodations will be built. With a budget of \$43 million, Phase One includes plans to renovate 41 acres of land north of the Park Drive Bridge and extending to Piedmont Avenue near the Ansley Mall area. This land is broken into two parcels – North Piedmont Park and Piedmont Commons. Renovations

to a third parcel, named Piedmont Gardens, will likely occur in subsequent phases because of the ongoing CSO project on the site. A map of this 53-acre expansion can be viewed at [http://www.piedmontpark.org/restoration/park\\_restoration.html](http://www.piedmontpark.org/restoration/park_restoration.html)

Additionally, this summer Piedmont Park Conservancy - together with the City of Atlanta and WSB-TV built the first Boundless™ playground and LEED-registered restrooms at Piedmont Park. A Boundless playground has sensory-rich features that allow children and caregivers of all abilities to interact with each other at his or her highest standard – think John Howell Park in Va-Hi. The adjacent, new family-friendly restrooms are a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) registered building, having been built to high environmental standards by considering sustainable site development, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.



# Resurgens Cycling

by: Cycle Man

Written under a pseudonym by an avid Va-Hi cyclist, this is the first in a series of articles about bicycling in our neighborhood.

You may be noticing more bicyclists around Virginia-Highland these days. Regardless of the reason – health consciousness, concern about global warming, or fear of rising gas prices – more and more in-town residents are dusting off their bikes and riding them.

As stifling heat gives way to crisp, cooler air, cycling becomes more attractive for running errands, commuting to the office, or simple exploring our neighborhoods on the weekends.

Carla Maynard has given up her car altogether.

“Va-Hi has everything I need nearby,” she says. “As I made more of my trips by bike it occurred to me my car simply took up space on the street and ate a hole in my checkbook. I got encouragement from a few friends who’ve been car-free for a while and I love the change.”

Not everyone can get away without a car completely, but all of us can join the growing numbers who rely less on motor vehicles.

Jett Marks counts cyclists during his daily bike commute to Midtown.

“As an engineer, I’m always measuring and analyzing anyway, and I thought I could have some fun counting the number of cyclists I see riding to and from the office,” Marks said. “Over the past year, the cyclists-per-mile have more than doubled. Last week I counted a record 38 cyclists from home to the office and back.”

Tom Beisel, his 11-year old daughter Carli and her friend Ansley rode over to Oakland Cemetery and Grant Park one recent weekend morning.

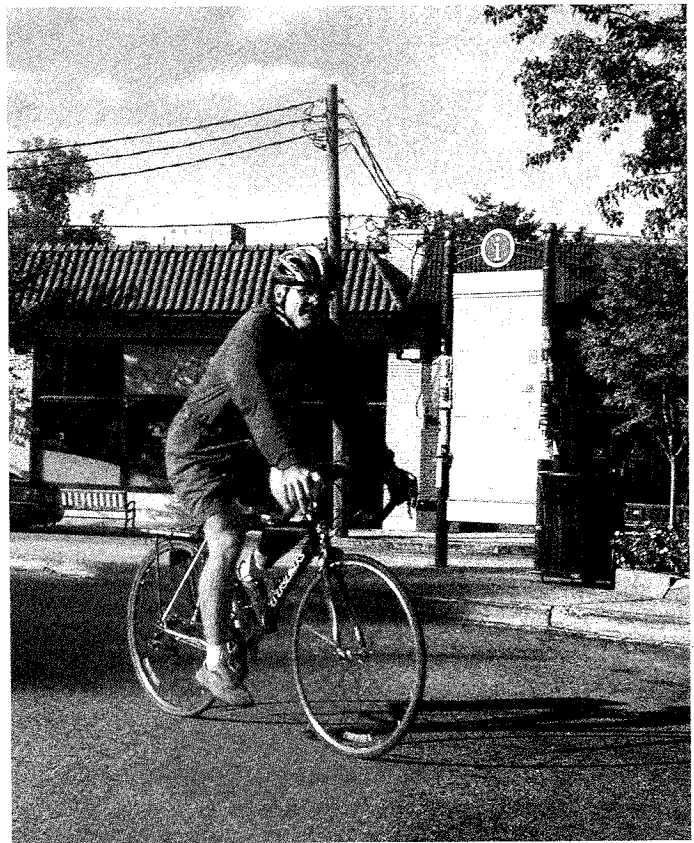
“On the bike, you take the road less-traveled, both literally and figuratively,” says Biesel. “We counted churches, rode through

graffiti tunnels, located restaurants we’d only heard about, and chased ice cream trucks. And it’s always fun going down a road you’ve never been down to find out where it leads.”

*Cycle Man* doesn’t mind catching ice cream from behind the counter, but it’s always fun to ride somewhere to find a new treat.

The bicycle: what other single tool can help us address air quality, traffic congestion, oil dependency, global warming and obesity? Oh, and it’s fun too. Maybe you’ll find yourself riding around Virginia-Highland sometime soon.

*Next Issue: Profile of a Va-Hi Cycling Family*



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# Public Safety Update by: John Wolfinger

There are many quality of life and public safety issues that affect our everyday life here in Atlanta - some we have no direct control over and are alien to our Virginia-Highland neighborhood way of life. One of the most persistent issues we face is homelessness, a way of life most of us have never experienced and never will. Most of us are lucky enough to have family and friends who can help us through life's rough spots before they get out of hand. We are blessed to have the skills to earn and save enough money to provide a lifestyle many will never be fortunate enough to realize. We are also lucky enough to have good mental health and we don't have to resort to substance and alcohol abuse to escape our problems.

Unfortunately, there are many members of our population who don't have the skills, education, common sense, friends and family to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table. Many of these folks have the gumption to overcome a lapse of bad luck and, with a little help sometimes, can get back on their feet again and resume a productive life. But those who get into the habit of using drugs and alcohol - and then are forced to find a way to pay for these vices - are the ones who cause problems for the rest of us. Homelessness in total is a huge problem, and its causes and subsequent impact on our society are not going to be solved by any one agency or program. But I'd like to highlight the work of our own Atlanta Police Department in addressing this situation.

The APD, through its Crisis Intervention and Project HOPE teams, tries to find help for as many homeless people as possible with the resources available. Project HOPE APD officers are crisis intervention-trained and can identify the needs of the chronically homeless, with emphasis on identifying those with mental health issues. Officers work with the 24/7 Gateway Center to help the homeless receive transitional services. Every other week, Project HOPE team members meet with United Way service providers to plan outreach for specific homeless residents. Sergeant Brent

Schierbaum is on duty to help the homeless in the Virginia-Highland area.

The HOPE team is ably headed up by Lt. Trudy Boyce, a 30-plus year veteran of law enforcement who has a PhD in counseling psychology. She also serves on the Georgia Crisis Intervention Team Advisory Board. We are very lucky to have her in an APD leadership role. This group of dedicated folks works out of APD Zone 5 (Downtown and Midtown) but serves the entire city.

Lt. Boyce recently provided the following guidelines for dealing with people you encounter on the street that may be mentally ill.

The presence on the street of the mentally ill increases and enhances the perception of crime, and we should be alert to these people. When you establish a pattern of seeing the same person at the same time and place whose behavior makes you nervous and wary, send an e-mail to Lt. Boyce at [tboyce@atlantaga.gov](mailto:tboyce@atlantaga.gov). Describe in as much detail as possible the exact scenario you observed so she can try to get help to this person. If the person is obviously violent, threatening or suspicious, immediately call 911 and describe the situation in detail, staying a safe distance from the person. Lt. Boyce says people are becoming immune to this type of behavior and not enough folks call 911 or e-mail her. There are only 50 beds available for the mentally ill at beleaguered Grady Hospital, so many of these folks are only given a prescription and sent back to the streets. After the prescription runs out, they tend to turn to street drugs, further adding to the instability of their situation.

Lt. Boyce is very busy, but also very caring and dedicated. She'll follow through on your e-mails as to situations you observe, so you can be a part of the solution by just letting her know about things you see everyday. Big problems are best solved with one little step at a time, and we can all help.

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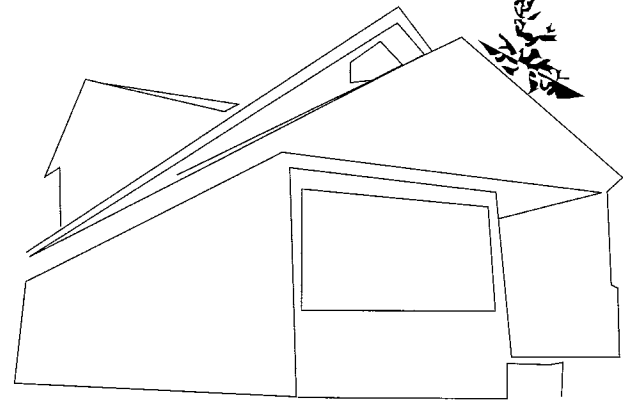
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# Inappropriate Infill:

## Could historic designation be the answer?

VHCA Committee looks at possible Historic Zoning Overlay as one way of dealing with out-of-scale development

by: John Becker



Few would argue that inappropriate infill development – demolition of current, intact and original homes and replacement with structures out-of-scale and/or out-of-character with surrounding properties – is one of the chief concerns for Virginia-Highland residents. Not only did 61% of those responding to a recent community survey identify ‘irresponsible’ infill as the most important issue Va-Hi faces, but it’s rare for any corner conversation on the topic of our neighborhood not to include reference to ‘that McMansion over there’ and the impact such development has on nearby property values as well as overall ambiance and quality of life in our neighborhood.

The VHCA’s Neighborhood Preservation Committee was formed earlier this year to determine how best to address the problem. Committee chair Lola Carlisle says some protection is already afforded by the Residential Scale Ordinance (RSO) passed recently by the Atlanta City Council.

“These revised building codes should help by shoring up loopholes that were allowing out-of-scale development in the area,” says Carlisle. “The revised code uses language that makes the ordinances easier to follow, measure and inspect.”

### Here are a few specific ways the new code should help:

- Retaining wall heights are specified, as well as how walls should be set back in a graduated way if a higher wall is needed.
- Raising the grade on a property is limited which, Carlisle says, will help prevent newly built homes from towering over the existing homes next to them.
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is clearly defined, closing a loophole that in some cases led to construction that was out-of-scale based on lot size.

Carlisle says that while the new RSO is a step in the right direction, it’s unclear just how much protection the new ordinance will provide. The committee is looking at a possible *historic*

*zoning overlay* as another means of protecting the neighborhood’s character from the effects of inappropriate infill.

“Pursuing historic designation is a long process and there are several levels and types of implementation,” Carlisle says. “Just considering applying for historic designation status requires a great deal of background research and planning.”

Local historic zoning is different from classification as a historic neighborhood in the National Register of Historic Places. Local historic zoning is developed and enforced by local governments. For our area, the Atlanta Urban Design Commission (AUDC) is charged with local historic district planning, management and enforcement.

Communities use local historic designation to protect pre-identified attributes of existing structures through the addition of new or modification of existing zoning regulations. Although local districts typically add zoning regulations, existing regulations are often changed at the same time to ease the variance process in some situations or allow the process to be avoided entirely in others.

The three types of local historic districts that Atlanta neighborhoods can consider are:

- 1. Conservation District:** Homeowners develop non-binding zoning regulations. Since the regulations are non-binding, the least protection is provided.
- 2. Historic Overlay District:** Homeowners develop binding zoning regulations that overlay existing regulations. Typically, these regulations apply to structural features that are visible from the street (front of structure only). An example would be prohibition of 2-door front-facing garages, typical of suburban homes, but not in keeping with our predominantly bungalow architecture.
- 3. Landmark District:** Homeowners develop binding zoning regulations that often apply to numerous parts of the structure and include features on all sides.

*“A zoning overlay provides residents, businesses, and developers with the neighborhood stability that comes from clearly defined guidelines that regulate redevelopment, which can make homes more marketable and increase property values.” - Liz Coyle, NPU-F Vice-Chair*

Carlisle points out that 63% of those responding to the neighborhood survey indicated that pursuit of historic zoning was an important issue to them. She says a preliminary look taken by the committee indicates the historic overlay option may make the most sense for Virginia-Highland since it provides the optimal combination of protection with flexibility for homeowners.

VHCA President Pamela Papner says, “If one considers the survey results and reads the comments by homeowners who responded to the survey (posted online at [www.vahi.org](http://www.vahi.org)), it seems clear that a large number of residents are concerned about protecting the ambiance, look, and feel of our unique and architecturally significant area of town, which in turn protects our property values. While many residents want regulations to protect against the “box-like” suburban-style homes that tower over their neighbors and cause problems with water run-off, most residents also recognize that we must not unduly impinge on residents’ ability to easily expand existing homes. Historic District designation can accomplish both goals, without being overly restrictive or administratively burdensome. Indeed, the end result can be quite favorable to our pocketbooks.”

Cameron McWhirter wrote in a recent Atlanta Journal Constitution article (October 6, 2007, p. 10), “Developers often dislike (historical) districts because they limit what they can build. Real estate professionals generally like them because they make homes more marketable. Home prices usually rise in a historic district because homeowners can be sure of the area’s stability.”

Papner concludes, “I hope homeowners keep an open mind, take the time to educate themselves, and become engaged in what is ultimately a community-wide decision. The role of the Civic Association should be to facilitate this discussion and pursue the course of action reflected by the consensus of neighborhood opinion; not to dictate a specific result. Lola Carlisle is dedicated to organizing and garnering grassroots involvement to ensure we obtain a broad-based consensus on what is most desired by the community as a whole.”

Now it’s time to get the rest of the community involved in the process, Carlisle says, by reaching out to residents for input on what attributes, if any, they would like to see protected through creation of a historic overlay district for Virginia-Highland.

“Community involvement is important, welcomed and required as part of the process,” says Carlisle. “We want to get people involved at every level – from a leadership or support role on the committee to simply providing opinions and feedback.”

Given the enormous task ahead, the committee can use all the help it can get. Here’s a list of what’s required just to get the AUDC to consider an application for local historic zoning:

- A photographic survey of all lots in the proposed district must be taken.
- A report outlining the history of the neighborhood must be drafted.
- Data – including date of construction and current owners – must be provided on each structure in the proposed district.
- A proposal for customized zoning regulations regarding those distinctive aspects of the neighborhood residents want to see protected must be written.
- All members of the community must be educated regarding effects of the proposed designation.
- Appropriate City Council members must be contacted and their support for the designation secured.

According to Carlisle, once this work is complete, an open-hearing process including the following steps will then begin:

- Notices of intent to nominate are sent to all property owners in the proposed district.
- All interested parties – including property owners – have the opportunity to speak at public hearings before the AUDC which meets to determine if the proposed district meets nomination requirements.
- If the district is nominated, representatives meet with city officials to offer input on customized zoning regulations.
- All interested parties – including property owners – have the opportunity to speak at a public hearing before the Zoning Review Board which addresses land use issues raised by any re-zoning action.
- After the Zoning Review Board hearing, the ordinance establishing the district and any customized zoning regulations must be approved by a majority vote of City Council.

There’s much work to be done before reaching that point and

## Colonel Mustard in the Kitchen with a Knife

*Colonel Mustard – referring to the character from the board game Clue – is a pseudonym for a Virginia-Highland resident who enjoys dining at the many wonderful restaurants in our neighborhood and sharing thoughts on the dining experience with others. In this issue the Colonel takes a look at a newcomer to the neighborhood, Figo Pasta.*

The new kid on the block in Va-Hi is actually one of five Figo locations in Atlanta. Ours is located on Virginia Ave. between Mooncakes and Paulo's Gelato, just off N.Highland. My friend and I arrived before 6:00 PM and there weren't many people there when we arrived, but by the time we finished, it had filled up. It's an attractive, simple Italian place with a unique concept: you choose your style of pasta and then the sauce you want. With at least 17 different pastas and 11 sauces from which to choose – along with extras and specials and salads and antipastos – the choosing isn't easy. But you do get to dictate exactly what you want to eat.

We started with salads. My friend had baby arugula topped with grilled salmon, plenty big enough for an entree. I had baby spinach topped with goat cheese, raisins and one of the best dressings I've ever had, described as a honey balsamic walnut vinaigrette. The slight sweet taste complemented the great pairings of raisins and cheese nicely. I had a half order and it was intimidating enough without imagining a full order. Two could easily share.

We both had ravioli - my friend's was wild mushroom in a wild mushroom cream sauce and I had four cheese pasta with Bolognese sauce. The wild mushrooms gave my friend's dish a strange black color so it would probably be wise to choose them for the pasta but combine it with a different style sauce or vice versa. Four cheeses made for a very rich but dry dish and I wished for more meat sauce. There are so many combinations that you'll have to go often to try them all.

Without a doubt, Figo Pasta's service was excellent. When you order at the entrance and pay, the dishes are brought to your table. Everyone along the way was delightful and helpful. This is a family friendly place where adults and children can feel relaxed. The night we were there, the evening was a magic Atlanta event. The doors were open and the people watching was great. And if you possibly have room, what better way to finish an Italian meal than with a gelato from Paulo's next door and more people watching.

Colonel Mustard gives Figo Pasta 4 hotdogs (out of 5).

### Figo Pasta

1021 Virginia Ave.  
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www.figopasta.com

M-Th 11:30-10:00  
F-S 11:30-10:30  
Sun 12:00-10:00

Carlisle says now is the time for interested residents to get involved.

"We're looking for people to lead or support various teams as we work to identify the attributes that define Virginia-Highland's character, seek community input, write documents detailing our neighborhood history, and catalog and collect data on all 7,000 plus homes in the area," says Carlisle.

Anyone wishing to get involved should email Carlisle at npc@vahi.org or come to one of the committee's regular meetings. Meetings are every other Wednesday at 1246 Virginia Ave., NE. Please email the committee to confirm meetings as they are subject to date, time and location change.

Carlisle cautions that the historic designation initiative is separate and distinct from the neighborhood commercial (NC) initiative being pursued at the same time by the VHCA.

"The NC initiative focuses on planning for new commercial development along North Highland Ave.," she says. "NC addresses the size and scale of commercial properties but does not address preservation of existing structures. Its success depends on a shared vision between commercial property owners and neighborhood residents. The historic overlay being researched by the Neighborhood Preservation Committee would not apply to commercial property."

### To learn more...

...about the VHCA's Neighborhood Preservation Committee and its efforts to protect Virginia Highland from inappropriate infill development, visit [www.vahi.org/planing/historic.html](http://www.vahi.org/planing/historic.html)

...about the AUDC and the steps required to seek local historic zoning designation, visit [www.atlantaga.gov/government/urban\\_design.aspx](http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/urban_design.aspx)

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## Former Harvest Location Gets New Occupant

After sitting unoccupied for a few years, the former Harvest Restaurant location is getting a new occupant this fall.

LaRaine's Bridal Boutique, currently located on St. Charles Place across from Hand in Hand, purchased the two story home-like structure on N. Highland Ave. next to CVS. According to manager Topher Carli, LaRaine's will relocate by late November and a December 1 opening date is targeted.

"It's a much larger building with three times the space of our current location," said Carli. "The additional space will allow us to add three new designers to what we already carry."

Carli says they're planning to have lots of lights and festive decoration up for the opening - just in time for the holiday season. He invites everyone to stop by and check out their new digs.

## Free Virginia Highland Home Sale Report

If you are curious about what your Virginia Highland home may be worth, here is an easy way to find out what homes like yours are selling for in today's market!



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Information is sincerely deemed to be accurate but is not warranted.

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# Volunteer Corner

*Here are a few suggestions on how you can get involved in and around your neighborhood and make a difference:*

## Tutoring/Mentoring at Inman Middle School

Make a difference in a child's life. Spend an hour per week as a tutor/mentor for at-risk sixth, seventh, and eighth graders who are struggling to keep up with the rigorous coursework at Inman. Please contact Jeanine Russo, Graduation Coach, at [jrousso@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:jrousso@atlanta.k12.ga.us) or 404-802-3224 or 678-499-5720 for more information.

## Volunteering at the DeKalb Rape Crisis Center

The Center is looking for dedicated volunteers to staff their 24-hour crisis line and the on-line hotline. Crisis line advocates will also serve as hospital companions for rape survivors. The Center is also looking for volunteers to be part of the Speaker's Bureau and serve on their Special Events Committees. Winter 2008 training begins in February and applications are being accepted now. Contact *Allison White*, Director of Volunteer Services at 404-377-1429 or by email at [Allison@dekalbrapecrisiscenter.org](mailto:Allison@dekalbrapecrisiscenter.org) for more information or to request an application. Applications can also be downloaded from their website, [www.dekalbrapecrisiscenter.org](http://www.dekalbrapecrisiscenter.org).

## Volunteering for Va-Hi Home Tour 2008

Volunteers are still needed to help with this year's Tour (see this issue's cover story). Anyone interested should send an email to [volunteer@vahihometour.org](mailto:volunteer@vahihometour.org) to see what tasks and shifts are still needed.

## Volunteering for the Neighborhood Preservation Committee

The VHCA Neighborhood Preservation Committee is currently seeking volunteers to help in the exploration of the benefits of a historic overlay for Virginia-Highland. Please send an email to [npc@vahi.org](mailto:npc@vahi.org) to find out how you can help and see the related story on p.05 of this newsletter for more information on the committee's historic zoning initiative.



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# VHCA and Local Firm Discuss Landscaping for New Substation

by: Jack White

As most neighborhood residents are aware, Georgia Power announced plans this past spring to build a substation on land it owns behind their office building facing Ponce Place. In response to neighbors' concerns, the company agreed to hire a landscaping firm of VHCA's choice to help address the impact of the new construction. The civic association's choice for this important work was Tunnell & Tunnell, whose recent local projects have included the ongoing redesign of the Olmstead Linear Parks along Ponce de Leon Ave., as well as a host of other work across the city and region.

While no one is thrilled by the idea of the new substation, working with Spencer Tunnell and Matt Sussman has been pleasant, professional, and informative. Their initial site analysis was illuminating, and their suggestions of how to minimize the impact of the new substation while integrating the entire GP complex into the neighborhood are intriguing. It remains to be seen how many of these ideas will actually be implemented, but to this point GP has been receptive and cooperative. We remain optimistic that the final outcome will be – on the whole – an overall improvement, at least in terms of softening some of the facility's existing visual impact and blending it into the neighborhood's overall landscape ethos.

The latter is something some of us weren't sure existed, but we've been persuaded otherwise by the professionals at Tunnell. The company plans to make at least one large public presentation on the landscaping plan (time and place TBD) and we urge everyone to attend. It may not change your mind about the substation, but you're likely to leave the meeting understanding more about the landscape of our neighborhood and (we hope) encouraged by some of the potential outcomes on Ponce Place.



**Rhonda Geraci**

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